

Bird Buffet investigation

Bird	Adaptation and food advantage	Bird Beak tools	Model food
Pelicans	Use pouch-like beaks to scoop fish from the water	Cup or other scoop	Small plastic fish or craft foam fish in a pan of water
Hummingbirds	Use long, slender beaks to probe flowers for the nectar they eat	Turkey baster or eye dropper	Tall vase or cylinder with colored water
Snipe and Shorebirds	Use long, thin beaks to probe shallow water, mud and sand for small invertebrates	tongs	Plastic or rubber worms buried in soil or sand
Woodpeckers	Use strong, pointed beaks to drill or chisel into wood and probe for insects	tweezers	Long narrow beads or rice tucked into the bark of a log
Owls, Hawks and Eagles	Use sharp, curved beaks for tearing meat from the mice and other animals they eat	scissors	Playdough wrapped around a stick
Hérons and Egrets	Use long, sharp beak for catching or spearing fish and amphibians	chopsticks	Styrofoam pieces (fish) floating in the water
Sparrows and Finches	Use short, stout beaks to crack open and eat seeds and nuts	nutcracker	Pecans, peanuts, almonds or other nuts *If children have allergies, provide gloves, or omit station.
Ducks (some) and Swans	Use blunt, spoon-like bills that have fine combs along upper and lower edges to strain aquatic plants and algae from water	strainer	Tea leaves in water

Directions for set up: Select two or more birds, represented by Bird Beak Tools for the chart below. Set up a different station for each type of Bird Beak Tool, with several of that tool so more than one child can participate at the same time. Each station should also include a sampling of all THE DIFFERENT Model foods for the birds you chose. This will allow children to try each tool with multiple foods to see which “beaks” are “adapted” for each “food”.

-After children have time at each station, pick up one of the bird “beaks” and ask children which “food” they found was easiest to eat with that beak. Which was the hardest? Tell children a little about a real bird with this kind of beak, using the information from the chart. Repeat this discussion for each of the “beaks”.

Source of activity: *Growing up WILD: Exploring Nature with Young Children*. Houston, TX: Council for Environmental Education, 2009. Print. Page 87